

William F. De Mott House  
King George Road  
Liberty Corner, Somerset County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-185

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

William F. De Mott House  
King George Road  
Liberty Corner, Somerset County, New Jersey

Owner: William F. De Mott, 1957 MR. & MRS. VAN H. NEHER

Date of Erection: 1760-1770

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One and one-half with a one  
story wing on each end

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - frame construction, clapboards

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch, dormers of  
later date

#### Historical Data:

James Compton the first in his will dated June 20, 1783 says "Than I give to my son James Compton, all the place I now live containing one hundred eighty three and three quarters of an acre". This James Compton the first was in all probability the first of the Compton family to settle in Somerset County and he was the probable builder of this house. The son to whom he willed the property is buried on the farm. This cemetery contains the

tombstones of James Compton and Abigail, his wife. According to the inscription on the tombstone James Compton died in 1813 at the age of sixty-two; that would make his year of birth 1751. According to the Compton genealogy it would appear that James the first was the son of Richard Compton one of the first settlers of Middlesex who also figures in Monmouth County records. Richard, according to Monnette, is the ninth child of William Compton and his wife Mary Wilmot; William was one of the original settlers of Woodbridge. In the vital records of Woodbridge is recorded the birth of a child to the Comptons in 1667-1668, the first white child born in Woodbridge.

A search of Somerset County records shows that Moore Compton was the owner in 1814. This Moore Compton was one of the sons of James Compton the second. Miss Cora Wilcox of Somerville, a descendant of the Compton family, has in her possession an account of a raid on the Compton House by a band of Hessian soldiers. This account tells how the youngest child of the Comptons, Sarah, told the soldiers that her father had gone to fight the British. The house was searched and the plunder piled on a wagon to be hauled away. However, before the soldiers had arrived Mrs. Compton had packed her valuables in a large chest upon which she sat. The soldiers ordered her to open the chest which she refused to do, resisting them when they attempted by force to move her. The officers saved her from being stabbed with a bayonet. Three days after the raid she gave birth to twins by name James Z. and Moore Compton.

Moore Compton obtained title to one hundred and seventy and a half acres in 1814. He assigned the property in 1824 to Andrew Smalley from whom Isaac Vail purchased in 1825 for three thousand one hundred and twenty-five dollars. The administrators of Isaac Vail, James and Agnes Vail, sold in 1828 to Peter F. Randolph and wife for thirty-three hundred and sixteen dollars. Randolph sold for a consideration of six thousand dollars

to John M. Irving in 1838. Irving and his wife are buried in the cemetery on the "plantation". The commissioners for John M. Irving transferred the property in 1856 to David King and Adeline who was a daughter of John M. Irving. In 1869 David H. Dunham came into the possession of the property and five years later he transferred it back to David W. King. The Kings held possession until 1916 when William De Mott, an uncle of the present owner, purchased the property still containing one hundred and seventy and one-half acres for eighteen thousand dollars.

In 1701 the Governor and Proprietors of East Jersey appointed John Harrison as agent to extinguish Indian land titles. Harrison purchased three thousand acres for himself in the Township of Bernards in the eastern portion bounded by the Passaic River and the Dead River and Penns Brook. The deed to this is dated June 24, 1717, the oldest in the township. At the death of Harrison, his son Benjamin sold to Daniel Hollingshead and George Risarick who in turn sold half of their interest to Colonel John Parker of Amboy and James Alexander of New York. This transaction took place between 1720 and 1730. The map of land titles in the Elizabethtown Bill of Chancery published by James Parker in 1747 shows James Alexander as owner of the plot where the house now stands. There is a gap, however, in the records between 1747 and Moore Comptons possession in 1814 which has not been bridged largely due to the fact that the records of Somerset County for the period before the Revolution were burned when the British destroyed the Court House at Millstone. It seems, however, that the Comptons probably purchased from Alexander sometime after 1747.

#### Bibliography:

Monnette, O. E. First Settlers of Ye Plantations of Piscataway and Woodbridge Olde East New Jersey 7 Parts Los Angeles, LeRoy Carman Press, 1930-1935

Honeyman, A. Van Doren "Earliest American  
Ancestors of Somerset Families" Somerset  
County Historical Quarterly Volume V

Snell, J. P. History of Sussex and Warren  
Counties, New Jersey Philadelphia, Everts  
and Peck, 1881

Material from Mrs. Cora Wilcox, Somerville,  
a descendant of the Compton family

A search of Somerset County court records  
by Frank P. Caufield, Essex County Office

Walter E. Pratt  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer

W 12/29/57